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STRATEGIC SERVICES UNIT, WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington, D.C.

Country: Germany

Subject: The German Freiheitsarmee in Russia

Date of Information: August 1945, May 1946

1. General Graf has been put in charge of all Soviet schools for the training of the German "Freiheitsarmee". In this organization Lt. Col. Hartmann, famous ex-Luftwaffe pilot, heads several squadrons; Col. van Hoven heads the Signal Corps; and Lt. Col. I. G. Lewis-Lietmann is prominent in the Air Force section. (No date given.)

2. [redacted] efforts to recruit German PWs for a German unit of the Red Army were halted in May 1945. Such enlistments were voluntary and no Germans were accepted for the Red Army proper.

[redacted] Comment: A memorandum of 17 July 1946 claimed that "about 7,000 German officers in the USSR, under the leadership of von Seydlitz and von Daniels, are trickling back into Germany, where they receive important posts in the German administration. It is rumored that they may be used to form a German Red Army." This last remark appears to reflect another report of late May: "German units of the Red Army...are reported among the Russian troops being transferred from Bohemia-Moravia to Germany, and especially, to Saxony." This report also commented on an item of April 1945 which suggested the presence of Germans in Soviet units in the Frankfurt and Oder River areas. Formations were said to be named Division Liebkecht, Brigade Thälmann, etc.

[redacted] Comment: [redacted] told of Russian officers' efforts to recruit Wehrmacht officers and Nazis for service in Russia or Eastern Germany with a German Freiheitsarmee.

James Riddleberger, Chief CE, State
15 August 1946

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